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LOSING THE WAR WITH THE HUMOURLESS

BUT NOT WITH METRO CRITIC, WHO FOUND THE FUNNY IN FILM THAT HACKERS GOT YANKED PAGE 23

Taking a bite out of northern subsidies?

Flaws in Nutrition North program exposed PAGE 14

Awesome-osity, $10 at a time

Ottawa foundation spreads 100 Sir John A's around town in the name of awesome PAGE 3

Neighbour 'absolutely shocked' by arrest

Home invasion.
Reported behaviour out of character for alleged attacker of WWII vet, says acquaintance; lawyer asks for mental health assessment

TREVOR GREENWAY
trevor.greenway@metronews.ca

Joanne Snow doesn't believe her neighbour, Ian Bush, is the kind of guy who could break into a 101-year-old war vet's house, tie him up, place a bag on his head and rob him blind.

The Orleans resident said it was "absolutely shocking" to learn that Bush, 59, who lives across the street from her, was arrested Saturday and charged with the brazen home invasion of decorated war hero Ernest Côté.

"I cannot believe it," Snow said Sunday.

"The family is just so nice and we enjoy them being our neighbours and we will continue being their neighbour and friends with them. Until they prove that he is absolutely guilty, I just hope the best for the family."

Police allege Bush disguised himself as a City of Ottawa employee to gain access to Côté's New Edinburgh apartment Thursday morning.

Once inside, they contend, he forced his way through the door and demanded cash. When Côté refused to hand over money, police say, Bush tied up the retired colonel and Second World War veteran and put a plastic bag over his head before leaving with undisclosed items. Côté was not injured in the incident.

Police arrested Bush at his Orleans home Saturday after surveillance video allegedly caught him using Côté's stolen credit card. It's a lot to take in for neighbours on the quiet Orleans street who describe Bush as a family man with a wife, three adult children and a new grandchild.

"It just doesn't seem possible. We have talked to them I don't know how many times. They are a beautiful family," said Snow, adding the Bushes have lived in the area for four or five years.

Bush owns a consulting firm in Ottawa. "Just knowing him and seeing them as the family and as the couple, I can't get it in my head that this has happened."

Bush's lawyer, Geraldine Castle-Trudel, is equally perplexed at the bizarre circumstances surrounding the case, especially since Bush isn't known to police and doesn't have a criminal record.

She said she is requesting a psychiatric assessment to determine if there are any mental illness issues at play.

"People 59 years old with no criminal record don't just suddenly jump up and go and get involved in something as crazy as this," said Castle-Trudel. "It brings up the question as to whether or not somebody has any mental health issues. Have they been duped into something? Have they got drunk with a bunch of people and done something, you don't know."

Castle-Trudel said she hasn't yet spoken to her client, but says the key question in all of this is how Bush came into possession of the credit card.

"Did he find a wallet on the street and is he dumb enough to use it, or is there some other way that he acquired the wallet?" she asked.

Bush made a brief court appearance Saturday by video link. He is back in court Monday morning.

Orleans man Ian Bush, 59, was arrested and charged with forcible confinement and attempted murder in the brazen break-in at the home of Second World War veteran Ernest Côté. LINKEDIN

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NEWS

$100,000 in damage

Trio flees home after cigarette sparks blaze

A carelessly discarded cigarette led to a close call for three people at 519 Apolo Way on Saturday, according to Ottawa Fire Services.

"Three adults were home at the time of the fire. Two guests were asleep on the second level, and one adult male was asleep in the basement recreation room," said Ottawa fire spokesman Marc Messier in an email.

"The male who was asleep in the basement awoke to smoke and flames and immediately evacuated the basement, alerting the guests as he got upstairs. The smoke alarm in the basement did not appear to have functioned. Everyone exited safely, however the man who had been sleeping downstairs was assessed on scene for smoke inhalation."

Messier said the Red Cross and Salvation Army were called in to help one man who will be displaced and another who was not home at the time of the fire. Damage to the building and its contents were pegged at approximately $100,000. METRO

$280 tickets

Police nail 96 for distracted driving

From Dec. 15 to 19, Ottawa police issued 96 $280 tickets to drivers using phones while driving.

Some 40 per cent of collisions in Ottawa involve distracted driving. METRO

Awesome Ottawa Foundation member Ashley Cabecinha poses with Kamal El Oualid and his fiancée Dalia Saad after buttonholing them at the Rideau Centre and giving them a $10 bill. SEAN MCKIBBON/METRO

Here's $10: Now spend it awesomely

#AWESOMETENNERS. Foundation celebrates latest in long string of philanthropic schemes

SEAN MCKIBBON
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The pink envelope sat on a shelf, nestled among a row of nutcrackers at the Gloucester Centre.

"It said OPEN ME #AWESOMETENNERS," said Courteney Curran. "So I thought, 'All right, I will.'"

She was pleasantly surprised to find a $10 bill inside with a note telling her that 100 other Ottawa residents would share a similar experience thanks to the Awesome Ottawa Foundation.

"Thanks for opening up the envelope. You are probably wondering what the heck was going on, but now you are the happy owner of a new ten-spot! Hurrah!" the letter says.

It goes on to say it's the foundation's way of "bestowing the honour of awesome" and offers suggestions as to how recipients might use their newfound cash, such as hiding it in a library book for someone to find or donating it to the Ottawa Mission.

"I saw the (Awesome Foundation) chapter in Liverpool did something similar, only they used five-pound notes," said Ashley Cabecinha, a member of the Awesome Foundation of Ottawa.

Cabecinha is the recipient of the foundation's $1,000 grant for December.

Avi Caplan, also part of the foundation, said it's unusual for the award to be given to a member but the group saw Cabecinha's project as a means of getting the word out about the organization.

"We'd like to see some more ideas," said Caplan. "We're looking at about 15 pitches a month and we'd like to see more."

The foundation consists of Ottawa philanthropists who contribute money to eclectic projects they think are neat.

Previous projects have included the establishment of a community wood shop, a weekly "electronic beats" hip-hop workshop for youth in low-income neighbourhoods and the development of a breathalyzer necklace.

Cabecinha gave out some envelopes by hand but hid others around town just to increase the randomness of the distribution.

Curran hadn't settled on what to do with her $10 surprise but was leaning toward a donation to help Ottawa's homeless.

Snow business. Police bust Arctic-bound drugs

The Ottawa police drug unit and tactical officers raided several residences in the Ottawa area Wednesday, cracking down on what they say was a drug distribution system using the mail to ship controlled substances to Arctic communities.

Police noted the value of drugs in northern communities is "exponentially" higher than in Ottawa. They added that Canada Post helped them in their investigation.

Search warrants were executed on homes in the 400 block of Leitrim Road; the 100 block of Castlegreen Point; the 0-100 block of Haxby Point; and the 1100 block of Meadowlands Drive.

The searches resulted in police seizing large quantities of drugs, including 668.55 grams of marijuana in 12 cans of coffee that were being mailed to Nunavut.

Police say in total, they seized 13.7 kilograms of pot valued at $137,512; 8.5 kilograms of hash valued at $169,436; 989.75 grams of powder cocaine valued at $98,975; 1,137.05 grams of an unknown powder sent for analysis; and $3,466 in cash.

Police laid a slew of drug charges against: Elia Awad, 55; George Abou-Eid, 46; George Awad, 60; Steven Ray, 24; Andrea Goluch, 37; Sara Guy, 19; Julie Robinson, 26; Christopher Campbell, 39; and Adla Awad, 84.

Some of the suspects are in custody awaiting show cause hearings, while others were released with court dates in January. METRO

A police evidence photo shows marijuana found in coffee cans that police allege were going to be mailed to Nunavut. POLICE HANDOUT

Collision

Man in critical condition after being struck by car

A man in a wheelchair was struck by a car Friday, said paramedics.

Ottawa Paramedic Service said it responded to a call for a man who had been riding in a motorized wheelchair and was struck by a car travelling southbound on Woodroffe Avenue, east of Deerfox Drive, just before 11 a.m.

Paramedics treated a man in his 50s for "multi-system trauma and a significant head injury."

They said the man was taken to hospital in life-threatening condition.

Ottawa Police Service is investigating the incident. METRO

Sparks Street to light up Ottawa sky at New Year's

Gone Country. Headliner Tim Hicks marks departure from previous year's rock 'n' roll acts

TREVOR GREENWAY
trevor.greenway@metronews.ca

The newly crowned 2014 CCMA Rising Star Tim Hicks will perform at the Sparks Street New Year's Eve party. CONTRIBUTED

The folks over on Sparks Street are going to light up the sky this New Year's Eve with an explosive display of fireworks over the urban street — the first time the capital has seen a New Year's fireworks show since 2007.

"We are really excited this year, it's the first year we have had fireworks," said Spark Street BIA Programming and Events Co-ordinator Kevin McHale.

Parliament Hill used to throw its own NYE party every year, but hasn't done so since the early 1990s. The National Capital Commission blasted off fireworks during NYE in 2007 to mark the 150th anniversary of Ottawa becoming the capital of Canada, but there hasn't been one since.

"People still come downtown looking for something to do on New Year's Eve," said McHale.

"I think Ottawa tends to be a bit of a quiet town when it comes to New Year's Eve. We like to just nestle in and do our own little thing, but it's really fun to just come down with a group of friends and watch the maple leaf drop, watch the pyro show and just be a part of the fun."

It won't be all that quiet on Sparks Street on Dec. 31 — not with Canadian country star Tim Hicks at the helm.

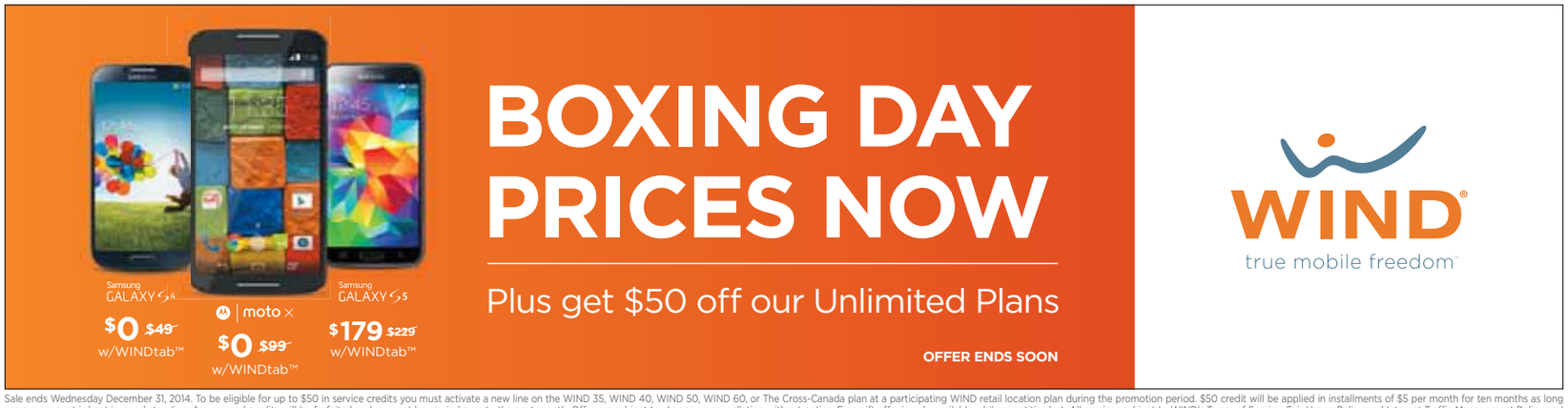
The newly crowned 2014 CCMA Rising Star has five consecutive Top 10 singles and nearly 3 million YouTube hits. Hicks' hard-rockin' country is sure to get even the stiffest civil servants moving their feet — or at least bobbing their heads.

"Country music is on the rise again," said McHale. "Tim Hicks is one of these Canadian artists that is just growing, growing and growing. He has a lot of great party songs."

The Sparks Street bash has been known to bring in elite headliners for it's NYE party with the likes of Toronto rapper K-OS taking over the stage last year and Juno winners Arkells ringing in the New Year in 2012.

This year, local band Autumns Cannon will be opening the show while Montreal club DJ 8BarZ will turn the urban street into a bumping dance floor. The night will also feature a maple leaf drop at midnight.

The event is free and appropriate for families. Everything gets underway around 8 p.m.



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ILLUSTRATOR: Dušan Petričić
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"Mom, wait!"

The man with the violin sways this way and that. His fingers move quickly. His bow dances across the strings. The skittering notes make Dylan want to dance too. Then the music slows and the man's eyes close as if the music is carrying him from bustle–bustle–bustle to somewhere far, far away.

"Please, Mom? Can't we stop? Please?"

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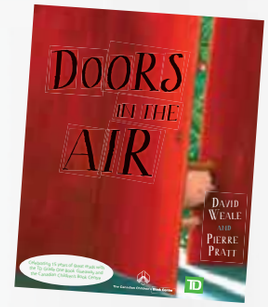

AUTHOR: David Weale
ILLUSTRATOR: Pierre Pratt
PUBLISHER: Orca Book Publishers

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Doors in the air
There's one over here
And one over there

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In a sad, soggy space
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To a happier place

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The Canadian Children's Book Centre

Ottawa mother invents Rip n Go, a bed-wetting solution for kids

'Huge lifesaver.' Environmentally-friendly product already available for purchase at select local stores

JOE LOFARO
joe.lofaro@metronews.ca

An Ottawa mom may have the answer to every new parent's prayers.

Louise Miner invented the Rip n Go, a detachable, waterproof, machine-washable absorbent pad that prevents kids from soaking the bed overnight if they wet.

The environmentally-friendly product is already available for purchase at select Ottawa stores, but it may soon be more widely available as Miner's business is gearing up for wider distribution with retailers like Amazon.

Miner, a mother of two from Orleans, came up with the idea after her second child had bed-wetting problems.

She said her very tired husband one night put a towel down in their daughter's crib to keep it dry, but then she thought there must be a better and safer way.

That's when she designed the Rip n Go, whose best feature is the Velcro seal which keeps the padded sheet in place during sleep.

A parent can rip the pad off with one hand and replace it with the fresh one without having to lift the mattress to change soiled bed sheets.

"At three o'clock in the morning, it's the last thing you want (to do)," said Miner.

Mom, entrepreneur and inventor Louise Miner says her Rip n Go is removable with just one hand and it helps keep two-year-old Anevay's bed dry at night. JOE LOFARO/METRO

"It was a huge lifesaver."

The new company received mentorship support from Invest Ottawa, an economic development agency that helps local startups.

Miner also developed a version for kids aged three to nine years old, which comes with matching bedding and pillow case.

There is also an adult version with a fitted sheet that remains in place with elastics under the mattress, so only the top pad needs to be replaced.

Miner hails the potty training abilities of the baby pad, which she used with her two-year-old, Anevay.

Instead of using diapers night after night, she used the pad to train her daughter to use the bathroom when she soiled herself.

"Old-school is the way to go.

"You take the diapers away, the pee goes on your leg, the leg wakes you up, and you start to maintain control and you go to the bathroom or you stop it," she said.

Follow Joe Lofaro on Twitter @giuseppelo

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Carleton curlers seek $40k for world games

For Carleton University's women's curling team winning the CIS nationals last March was only half of the battle to get to the World University Games in Spain.

"We're really excited. We had a tremendous season last year," said team member Lynn Kreviazuk.

Now the team just has to raise $40,000.

In preparation for the world games the team has had to keep up its training regime, keep sharp by entering competitions, meaning entry fees and travel costs and then there's the cost of the trip to Spain and accommodations.

The team held a fundraising event at the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club and has a fund-raising page on Carleton University's futurefunder.carleton.ca page.

According to the team's bio on the fundraising page, the team has had a steady rise to the top.

They captured fifth place in their first appearance at the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) competitions in 2012; fourth place in 2013,

From left, Carleton University's women's curling team skip Breanne Meakin, 24, vice Lauren Horton, 20, second Lynn Kreviazuk, 23 and lead Jessica Armstrong, 20, are headed to the World University Games in Spain in February, but they need to raise some money to get there. Not pictured, coach Doug Kreviazuk. CONTRIBUTED

and were OUA Silver Medalists in 2014 and earning the right to compete at the CIS National Championship, in Regina, Sask., where they won.

The rest of the team consists of skip Breanne Meakin, 24, vice Lauren Horton, 20, lead Jessica Armstrong, 20 and coach Doug Kreviazuk.

"We've done pretty well so far. We've raised just short of $9,000," Kreviazuk said, adding that the Canadian Curling Association would also be helping with the cost of travel.

She estimated that assistance would probably put the team "about half way" to recovering its costs. METRO

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Two local teens charged in killing of Tausif Chowdhury

South Keys transit station. Killing of 23-year-old Carleton student is the sixth homicide in the capital in 2014

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Ottawa police have arrested two men with the killing of an international Carleton University student last month.

Police charged John Ruch, 19, and Steven Kozielo, 18, with one count of manslaughter and one count of robbery.

Police said the two Ottawa men appeared in court on Saturday. They are scheduled to appear in court again on Monday.

The relationship between the two accused men and the victim, 23-year-old Tausif Chowdhury, is not clearly known and police did not release any further information regarding the case.

Passersby found Chowdhury's beaten body on a footpath behind the South Keys transit station at around 7 a.m. on Nov. 27.

A hammer was found close to the footpath after his body was discovered, but police don't know if it was used in the homicide, according to media reports.

The 23-year-old studied engineering at Carleton after switching from Queens University, according to his friend, Mohaimen Hyder.

Hyder told Metro last month Chowdhury was a "really good guy" who liked playing video games with friends.

The victim's parents live outside of Canada.

Hyder said he and his friends were all in shock and wanted justice.

Tausif Chowdhury was found beaten to death on a footpath behind the South Keys transit station at around 7 a.m. on Nov. 27. FACEBOOK.COM

LRT project

City opens LeBreton Flats' alternate route

Preston Street is being extended from Albert Street to the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway.

Full access will be available for motorists, transit users, cyclists and pedestrians.

This extension has been put in place to provide an alternate route through LeBreton Flats during the closure of Booth Street for construction activities related to the Confederation Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) project.

During construction, the Preston Street extension will provide an alternate route to connect Albert Street to the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway and the Chaudière Bridge.

While the Transitway will remain open, LeBreton Station will move west from Booth Street to the new Preston Street intersection. METRO

20th year

Library holding annual youth writing contest

The Ottawa Public Library's 20th annual Awesome Authors Youth Writing Contest is underway.

This contest, for aspiring young poets and short story authors, is open to writers between the ages of 9 and 17. They are invited to submit poems and short stories in English or French. The contest deadline is Feb. 16.

Participants can win prizes which will be presented in the spring. For contest details, visit www.BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca/AwesomeAuthors or contact InfoService at 613-580-2940 or InfoService@BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca.

The contest is sponsored by the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association, which publishes potpourri, an anthology of the winning poems and stories. Visit the Friends of OPL website at www.OttawaPublicLibraryFriends.ca to order a copy. METRO

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Honeyman & The Brothers Farr will release a new album during the band's annual Christmas show, which takes place Dec. 27 at the Black Sheep Inn. CONTRIBUTED

Band brings studio sound to the stage

Honeyman & The Brothers Farr.
Canadian band releases their latest in Ottawa at a show aiming to be a 'legitimate experience'

TREVOR GREENWAY
trevor.greenway@metronews.ca

James Farr wants to make sure that whatever his alt-folk band does in the studio, they can reproduce it live.

So when his band — Honeyman & The Brothers Farr — entered the studio for its sophomore album, I Had You Before Eyes, its members laid the whole thing down live, track by track, with everyone jamming out on 11 new tunes simultaneously.

"It took four years to write, but when we went into the studio, we blew through it in a week," said Farr, guitarist and vocalist for a band that also features his brother, Eric, and Simon Honeyman. "We went in there and just rocked out. It was five guys in a room and we just played."

Too often, Farr says he comes across great bands that sound amazing on their albums, but is later "disappointed" when their live shows fail to meet the record's expectation. He said he doesn't want anyone to walk away disappointed from his band's annual Christmas Black Sheep Inn show.

"A lot of bands get themselves into a bind, because they go into a studio for a year and they hunker down and they do all this recording and it's actually not very representative of what the band sounds like live," said Farr from his Toronto home. "For me, the live experience of a band is the most legitimate experience of a band. When the record mirrors that, or when the record is in sympathy with that experience, then the band stands a much better chance of success."

Farr didn't describe the new record as a departure from the band's first album, but said listeners will be able to hear how the band has "refined" its skills since joining up in 2007.

"I think our songs have become a lot better and I think our abilities on our instruments have become a lot better," said Farr. "We have become better singers, guitar players, piano players."

I Had You Before Eyes

Honeyman & The Brothers Farr will release its new album Dec. 27 at the Black Sheep Inn. Tickets are $10.

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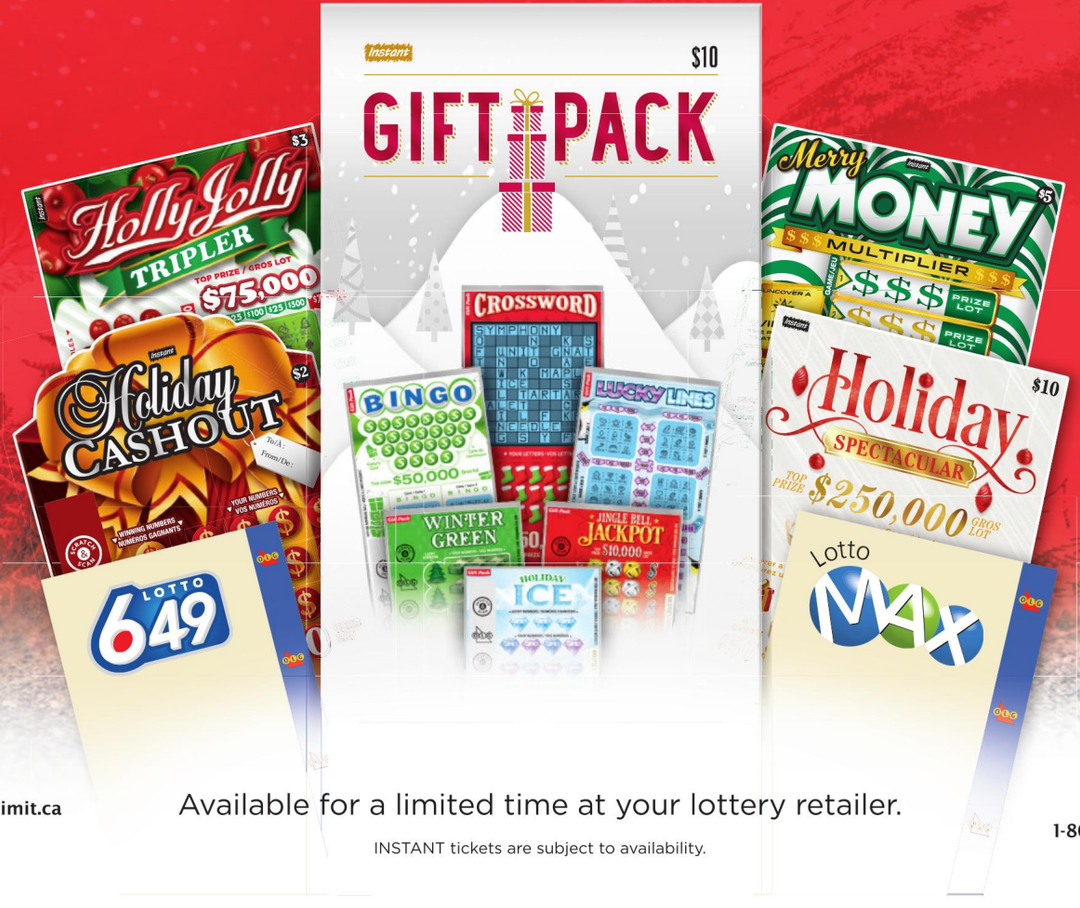

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Aiden Chi is seen in the food court area of the University of Calgary's MacEwan Hall. Chi has turned to crowd-funding to raise some of his tuition amid fears he'll be forced to return to his native South Korea and serve in the country's military. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO IN CALGARY

Calgary student fears forced return to Korea

'Really scary.' International tuition three times that charged for Canadian students

JEREMY NOLAIS
Metro in Calgary

Aiden Chi is a proud Canadian, regardless of whether he's officially recognized as such.

The 20-year-old's parents moved him from his native South Korea seven years ago in hopes that he would learn English, get a good job and start a family of his own.

They were never able to obtain proper citizenship, but Chi managed to enrol as an international student in the University of Calgary's business program and now is in his second year.

Extending his work visa depends on him continuing his studies, but he faces a roadblock to the tune of $30,000 to get through his third year.

Adding to the Chis' stress of being forced to return to Korea is that every man aged 20 or older is required to serve two years in the country's military.

"It's actually really scary," he said. "I don't want to leave anything behind, all of my work and everything. It feels like everything I did here will be for nothing."

Chi's parents had been supporting him through the first half of his degree but can no longer afford to do so.

The university, meanwhile, maintains that international students pay the true cost of tuition — $1,833.84 per course, according to the school's website — whereas Canadian students pay a subsidized rate — $538.59 per course — based on taxes paid to Revenue Canada.

Chi said he fears not having enough time to raise the needed funds to keep his spot at the school. He's now launched a crowd-funding page in hopes of raising $30,000. To date, about $1,100 has been contributed.

"When I'm in school I can't really work a lot," he said. "It's not a lot of time to raise tens of thousands of dollars … if I go back to Korea I'll be forced to speak Korean … the whole point of coming to Canada was to learn English and if I go back I won't have the chance."

Fundraising

For a link to Aiden Chi's fundraising page, head to metronews.ca/calgary

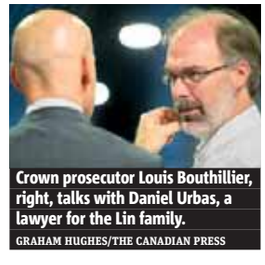
Luka Rocco Magnotta. Day 6 of jury deliberation passes without a verdict

The jury will deliberate for a seventh day on Monday at Luka Rocco Magnotta's murder trial.

Day 6 on Sunday came and went without the 12 jurors reaching verdicts in the five charges against the accused.

Magnotta is charged with first-degree murder and four other offences in the slaying and dismemberment of Chinese engineering student Jun Lin in May 2012.

The eight women and four men deciding his fate began deliberations on Tuesday and have since contacted the court only twice — once to ask a legal question and once to get technical help.



Crown prosecutor Louis Bouthillier, right, talks with Daniel Urbas, a lawyer for the Lin family. GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Magnotta has pleaded not guilty by way of mental disorder and is trying to be found not criminally responsible.

His lawyer says he is schizophrenic and couldn't tell right from wrong at the time of the slaying, but prosecutors say Lin's death was planned and deliberate.

In addition to the murder charge, Magnotta is also accused of criminally harassing Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other members of Parliament; mailing obscene and indecent material; committing an indignity to a body; and publishing obscene materials.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Nutrition North: What went wrong?

Food security in the North. Many have expressed concern that businesses are not passing Nutrition North subsidy to consumers

Quoted

"What you're doing is you're putting the subsidy in the hands of the businesses. If you're in business to make a profit, are you going to be that willing to have good will?"

Ron Elliott, former representative of a High Arctic riding in Nunavut's legislature.

A price tag lists the price and subsidy of a four-litre jug of milk at a grocery store in Iqaluit, Nunavut on December 8.
SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

In detail

Food has always cost more in the North, due to the expense of shipping it in.

- The federal government used to subsidize shipping costs through the old Food Mail program.
- Under Food Mail, retailers had to rely on airlines chosen by Canada Post to get the subsidized freight rate.
- But in 2011, the Conservatives replaced Food Mail with Nutrition North, which shifted the subsidy to retailers, who in turn were expected to pass it on by cutting food costs for consumers.
- Many are skeptical that businesses are actually passing on the full subsidy to consumers.

For years, northerners have complained about Nutrition North to anyone who would listen, grumbling that the $60-million annual federal food subsidy was doing little to ease their staggering grocery costs.

No one, it seemed, took much notice.

That all changed last month, when auditor general Michael Ferguson revealed that the program's overseers are largely in the dark about whether the subsidy is doing anything for the people who need it the most.

One of Ferguson's observations in particular struck a nerve with some northerners: that some retailers are cashing in on the subsidy.

"The stores are making money based on the amount of food they're bringing in, and in return they're supposed to lower their food price," said Leesee Papatsie, who helped organize Nunavut-wide food price protests and started the Feeding My Family group on Facebook.

"In upper, High Arctic communities, the subsidy is higher than the freight cost. So they're making money like that."

Food has always cost more in the North, due to the expense of shipping it in from other parts of Canada, the region's relatively small and dispersed population, and the distance from major transportation hubs.

The federal government used to subsidize shipping costs through the old Food Mail program in an effort to make food more affordable.

First Air, an airline owned since 1990 by the Inuit people of Quebec through Makivik Corp., had a contract with Canada Post to deliver groceries to Nunavut communities at set rates. That meant under Food Mail, retailers had to rely on airlines chosen by Canada Post to get the subsidized freight rate.

But in 2011, the Conservatives replaced Food Mail with Nutrition North, which shifted the subsidy to retailers, who in turn were expected to pass it on by cutting food costs for consumers.

Ron Elliott, who used to represent a High Arctic riding in Nunavut's legislature, said people are skeptical that businesses are actually passing on the full subsidy to customers.

"What you're doing is you're putting the subsidy in the hands of the businesses," Elliott said in a telephone interview from his home in Arctic Bay.

"If you're in business to make a profit, are you going to be that willing to have good will? My problem is, you can't really tell a business what profit they should have, right? So if the market can bear something, usually that's what people charge."

Aboriginal Affairs has not required merchants to report their profit margins, which over time would indicate whether the full subsidy is being passed on. Ferguson's report said such a measure would help quell skepticism about whether consumers are actually getting the full benefit of the subsidy.

The department now says that as of April 1, retailers will have to provide information on their profit margins.

Nutrition North gives retailers a subsidy based on the weight of eligible foods shipped to eligible communities. But the auditor general found Aboriginal Affairs did not choose eligible communities based on need. To highlight the problem, Ferguson's team pointed to two remote communities in northern Ontario, both about the same distance to the nearest town and lacking year-round road access. One is eligible for a subsidy of $1.60 a kilogram; the other only five cents a kilogram.

The audit found that the department chose communities based on two factors: whether they had year-round road access and if they had used the old Food Mail program.

Communities that made very little use of Food Mail are only eligible for a partial subsidy of five cents per kilogram, while places that did not use food mail aren't eligible.

"Consequently, community eligibility is based on past usage instead of current need," the report says. "As a result, there may be other isolated northern communities, not benefiting from the subsidy, where access to affordable, nutritious food may be an issue."

Aboriginal Affairs told Ferguson's team it has looked at expanding the full subsidy to around 50 fly-in northern communities, but doing so would increase the cost of the program by $7 million a year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian man shot by U.S. border guards

The U.S. border agency says a Canadian man was shot after allegedly pointing a handgun at guards at the Ambassador Bridge crossing between Windsor, Ont., and Detroit.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection says in a statement the man stopped his car before the U.S. inspection booth around 3 a.m. Sunday and starting walking toward border officers while waving a gun.

It says the officers ordered him to drop the weapon but that he then pointed it in the officers' direction, prompting them to open fire.

The agency says the man, whom it hasn't been identified, was treated and released from hospital before being taken into custody.

Officials tight-lipped

Kris Grogan, spokesman for the U.S. border agency, says no additional information will be released at this time.

It says the man has had "previous encounters" with Canadian law enforcement.

Windsor police say the man was seen waving a handgun in the parking lot of a local McDonald's some 20 minutes before the incident at the border crossing.

They say that when police arrived he was ordered to drop the weapon but refused, and then pointed the gun at officers, who were not aware of what was happening as they were busy dealing with passersby behind the man.

According to the police statement, the man then told officers "Why haven't you shot me yet?" and that officers tried to talk him down.

Police say the man then got back into his SUV and drove off before officers could get back to their cruisers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Overall drug consumption stable in the army, blind study reveals

2013 study. Pot remains the drug of choice while cocaine is gaining popularity; report blind-tested for 11 substances

Marijuana remains the drug of choice for members of the Canadian army, based on the Force's latest blind drug testing report that also found cocaine is gaining popularity among some members.

The report, done between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2013, found the overall drug consumption rate has been relatively stable since 2010 but suggested young, non-commissioned members were more prone to do drugs.

The findings, contained in a 42-page report obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act, included testing for 11 controlled substances at 26 Armed Forces units across the country. There were 4,198 participants from most ranks and age groups.

The testing found that 279 urine specimens — or 6.6 per cent — tested positive for at least one drug, with pot detected in 5.3 per cent of all of the samples. That's up from the 4.2 per cent in 2012 and 4.8 per cent the year before that.

Positive test results for marijuana came from 19 units, with the bulk from 3 Royal Canadian Regiment and 2 Service Battalion in Petawawa, Ont.

The report says nine units had cocaine-positive samples, with the most again from members in 3 Royal Canadian Regiment in Petawawa. Results showed 44 samples overall had traces of cocaine, up from the 29 positive samples the previous year, making it one of the higher rates since the testing started in 2007.

While the numbers were considered low, members of the psychosocial health dynamics team who wrote the report said there was a higher likelihood that members tested positive for cocaine in 2013 than in 2009.

"There was a significant difference for the proportion of cocaine-positive samples, such that 2013 blind drug testing participants were significantly more likely to test positive for cocaine than those tested in 2009," the report states.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

No disciplinary action

The Canadian Forces has a zero-tolerance policy for illicit drugs and conducts testing to gather data to guide its drug program. No one was available for an interview on the report, but a spokeswoman said that "the results are not used for disciplinary purposes as no urine sample can be attributed to a specific member."

- The findings provide insight only.

Marijuana remains the drug of choice for members of the Canadian army, internal drug tests reveal. GETTY IMAGES

In this Sunday, May 11, 2014, file photo, a soldier and government officials inspect the bridge that links Nigeria and Cameroon after an attacked by Islamic militants. JOSSY OLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Boko Haram stages cross-border attacks and recruitment

Nigeria's Islamic extremists. Nigeria's neighbours worry about Boko Haram's threat to neighbouring countries

Thousands of members of Nigeria's home-grown Islamic extremist Boko Haram group strike across the border in Cameroon, with co-ordinated attacks on border towns, a troop convoy and a major barracks.

Farther north, Boko Haram employs recruits from Chad to enforce its control in northeastern Nigerian towns and cities.

In Niger, the government has declared a "humanitarian crisis" and appealed for international aid to help tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees driven from their homes by the insurgency.

These recent events show how neighbouring countries are being drawn increasingly into Nigeria's Islamic uprising. Thousands of people have been killed in Nigeria's five-year insurgency and some 1.6 million people driven from their homes.

"We are concerned about the increasing regionalization of Boko Haram," said Comfort Ero, Africa director for the International Crisis Group.

On Sunday, Cameroon's army announced it had broken up a Boko Haram training camp in the Mayo-Danay district in the country's north.

Ero cautioned that co-operation between the neighbouring countries is weak. She said there is also distrust of the capabilities of Nigeria's once-proud military, which has been battered by Boko Haram.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

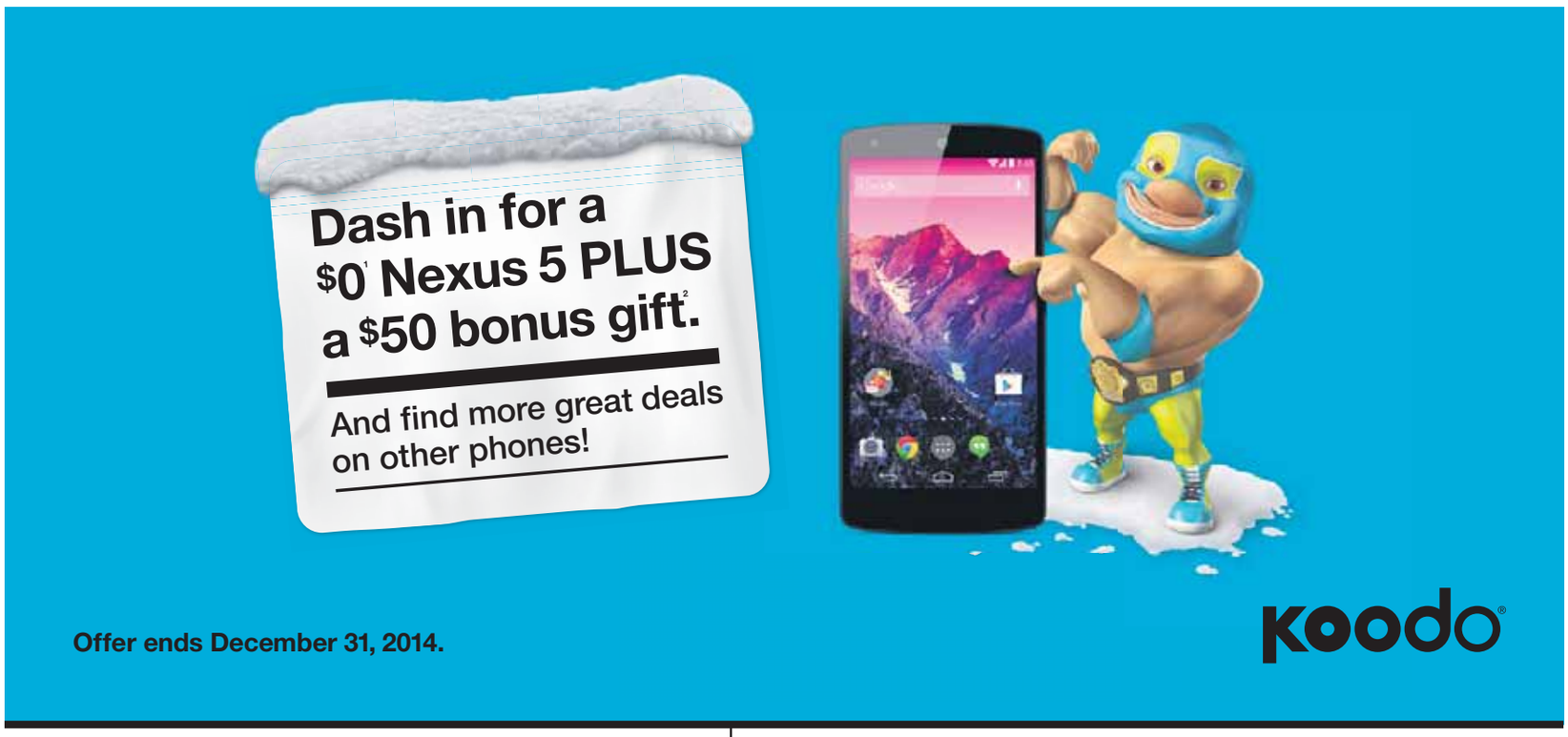
Boko Haram

Video shows civilians being killed

A new video from Nigeria's home-grown Boko Haram extremists shows gunmen mowing down civilians lying face-down in a dorm, and a leader saying they are being killed because they are "infidels." There are so many corpses the gunmen have difficulty stepping to reach bodies still twitching. Most appear to be adult men.

"From now, killing, slaughtering, destructions and bombing will be our religious duty," the group leader says in a message.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Washington. U.S. reviews North Korea's terror status

President Barack Obama says the United States is reviewing whether to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism as Washington decides how to respond to what he calls an "act of cybervandalism," not one of war, against a movie company.

Sony Pictures Entertainment said it cancelled the theatrical release of The Interview after distributors refused to show it. The comedy involves a plot to assassinate North Korea's leader.

David Boies, a Sony lawyer, said The Interview is "going to be distributed, and what Sony has been trying to do is to get the picture out to the public," while protecting the rights of company employers and moviegoers. Boies said theatres "quite understandably" decided not to show the film as scheduled because of the threats. "You can't release a movie unless you have a distribution channel," he said.

North Korea has denied hacking the studio, and on Saturday proposed a joint investigation with the U.S. to determine the true culprit. The White House rejected the idea and said it was confident North Korea was responsible.

President Barack Obama.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Obama is promising to respond. "We're not going to be intimidated by some cyber-hackers," he said.

The president said the U.S. would examine the facts to determine whether North Korea should land back on the terrorism sponsors list.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pakistan. Arrests made in Taliban school carnage

Authorities made several arrests in the case of the Taliban school attack that killed 148 in the northwestern city of Peshawar, on Sunday, officials said.

"Quite a few suspects who were facilitators in one way or the other have been taken into custody," Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said, adding that the interrogations were "moving ahead in a positive manner." He did not disclose their identities or say how many they were.

Seven Taliban gunmen wearing explosives belts stunned the world on Tuesday by storming into the military run school and slaughtering 148 people, including 132 students. Another nearly 121 students were wounded in the ensuing eight-hour siege of the school, located in an area where many military families live.

The group claims it fights to establish a ruling system based on its own harsh brand of Islam. It has killed thousands over nearly a decade.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

N.Y. cop killer had a criminal history

Brooklyn. Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu were gunned down at close range in their patrol car

New York City Police Commissioner Bill Bratton leaves flowers at an impromptu memorial near the site where two police officers were killed in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Sunday. SETH WENIG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The gunman who fatally ambushed two police officers in their squad car had a long criminal record, a hatred for police and the government, and an apparent history of mental instability that included an attempt to hang himself a year ago, authorities said Sunday.

Moments before opening fire, Ismaaiyl Brinsley approached people on the street in Brooklyn and asked them to follow him on Instagram, then told them, "Watch what I'm going to do," Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce said.

A portrait of the Brooklyn-born gunman emerged as big-city police departments and union leaders around the U.S. warned officers to change their routines and insist on extra backup a day after Brinsley carried out what he portrayed online as retaliation for the slayings of black men at the hands of white police officers.

Brinsley was black; the slain officers were Asian and Hispanic.

The slayings come at a tense time. Police nationwide have been criticized for months for their tactics, following Eric Garner's death in a New York officer's chokehold and Michael Brown's fatal shooting in Ferguson, Missouri. Protests erupted in recent weeks after grand juries declined to charge the white officers involved.

Investigators were trying to determine if Brinsley had taken part in any protests over the deaths of Brown and Garner, whose names he invoked in his online threat, or simply latched on to the cause for the final act in a violent rampage.

They said he travelled frequently between the South and New York, where he fathered a child in Brooklyn, and had been in the city earlier in the week.

Brinsley, 28, had at least 19 arrests in Georgia and Ohio, spent two years in prison for gun possession and had a troubled childhood so violent that his mother was afraid of him, police said.

On Saturday afternoon, Brinsley approached a squad car from behind in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighbourhood and fired four shots, killing Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu. He then ran into a subway station and committed suicide.

Hours earlier, Brinsley had shot and wounded his ex-girlfriend at her home outside Baltimore, then made threatening posts online, including a vow to put "wings on pigs" and references to the Brown and Garner cases. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Florida

Officer killed

A police officer was shot and killed early Sunday in the Florida town of Tarpon Springs, authorities said.

The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office said in a statement that police have arrested 23-year-old Marco Antonio Parilla Jr. on suspicion of first-degree murder.

The Tarpon Springs Police Department identified the slain officer as 45-year-old Charles Kondek, a 17-year veteran of the local police department. Originally from New York, Kondek had previously served in the New York City Police Department for more than five years, authorities said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Live from a Moscow apartment: Independent Russian newscasts

Dozhd. News channel came under pressure as the Kremlin sought to unify the country behind the annexation of Crimea and the Ukraine affair

A camera assistant adjusts a microphone on Dozhd Channel's anchorman Lev Parkhomenko, centre, in their studio-apartment in Moscow earlier this month. Dozhd came under pressure this year and while the government was careful not to shut it down, a Kremlin-instigated smear campaign is causing a slow demise of this rare independent broadcaster. ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Among the five TV journalists interviewing Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, the odd one out was easy to spot. Mikhail Zygar's questions were sharper than those of the others, who headed back to spacious studios while Zygar broadcast his piece from a Moscow living room.

The Dozhd news channel, whose editor-in-chief Zygar was given a Committee to Protect Journalists award last month, rose to prominence in 2011 with its coverage of the mass protests against Vladimir Putin, who was then prime minister but preparing to return to the presidency. State-owned television largely ignored the protests.

As other Russian television channels have grown increasingly subservient this year, providing propaganda backing for the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and Russia's aggressive policy toward Ukraine,

Dozhd didn't follow the lead — and is now paying for it.

Putin's government has been careful not to order the channel to shut down, but a Kremlin-instigated smear campaign has driven this rare independent broadcaster to the brink of demise. Past strollers and bicycles in the hall, a Soviet-era apartment in central Moscow now houses the studio of Dozhd, whose combined online and TV audience is about 12 million.

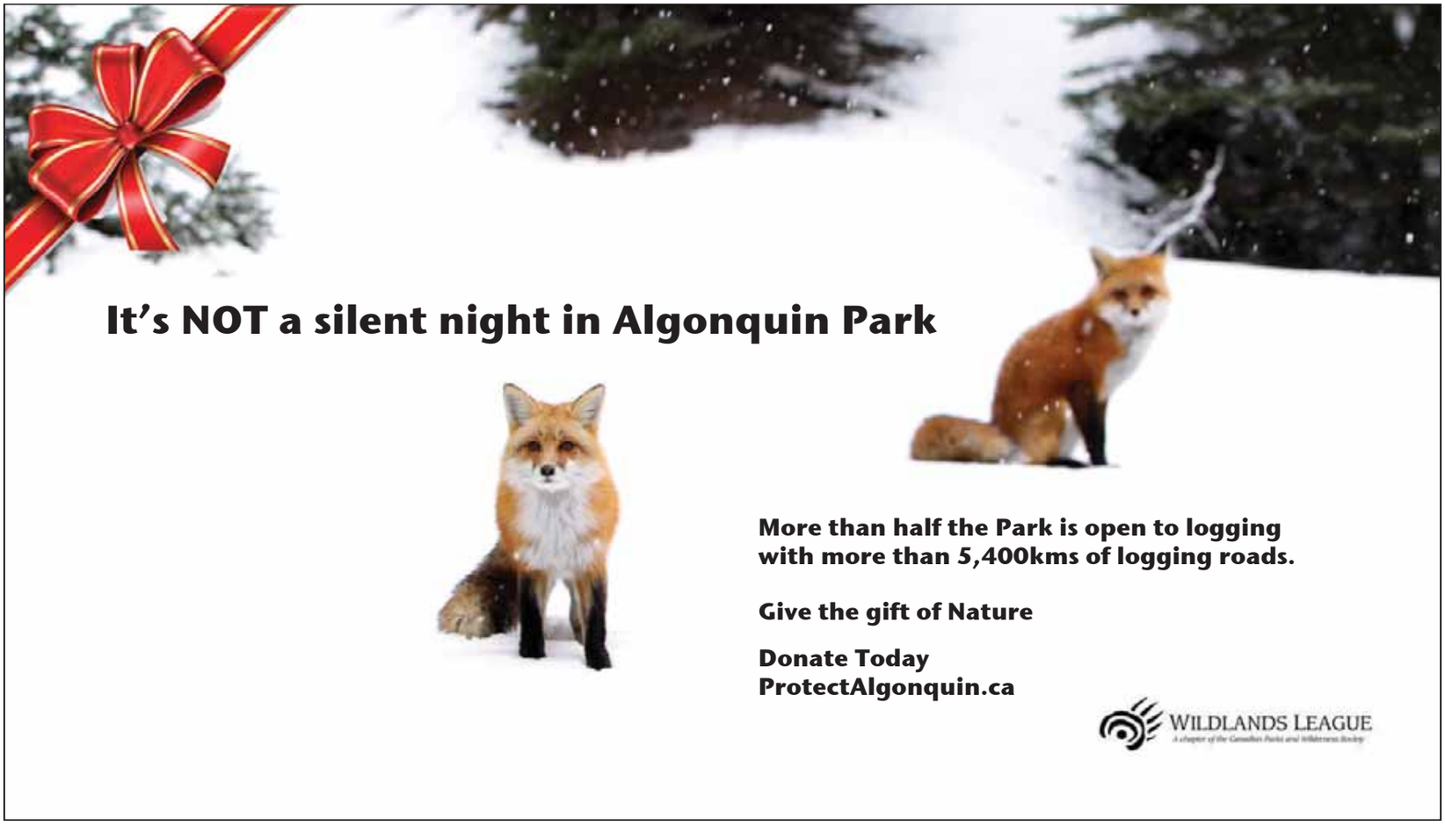
Since its inception in 2010, Dozhd had its studio in a former chocolate factory on the Moskva River, but its landlord broke the lease in November, forcing the channel to look for new space. Sympathizers offered Dozhd a place elsewhere, but last week they were told they can't broadcast out of there anymore.

During Putin's 15 years in power, the Russian television landscape has been sanitized to the point where news coverage on all channels is almost identical. State channels toe the Kremlin line and private channels, most of which are owned by Kremlin-friendly oligarchs or state-controlled conglomerates, are just as obedient. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beginning of the end

Dozhd's troubles began when it began aggressively covering the daily anti-government protests in Ukraine, which state-owned television dismissed as a neo-Nazi coup.

- The crackdown came at the end of January, when Dozhd hosted a history program on the 1941-44 Siege of Leningrad and put a question up for a vote: Would it have been worth it to surrender Leningrad to save lives?
- The question caused a stir, prompting Kremlin officials to call for a shutdown of the channel. Nearly all cable networks dropped Dozhd.
- Problems multiplied in summer when the Russian parliament passed a bill that barred cable channels from running ads. The channel cut its expenses in half, shed 30 per cent of its staff and reduced its monthly budget to $357,000 before being hit with the eviction notice.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WILDLANDS LEAGUE

A young woman poses Sunday inside a symbolic revolutionary Romanian flag, with the communist crest removed, during a re-enactment of the 1989 uprising in Bucharest, Romania. VADIM GHIRDA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Romanians 'like' new president

Klaus Iohannis. The former mayor got almost 1.3 million likes on Facebook after a surprising runoff win

Romania's Parliament swore in a former mayor as the country's new president, following an election he called a triumph for democracy 25 years after communism rule ended in his country.

Pro-Western Klaus Iohannis, 55, promises a different style from combative outgoing leader Traian Basescu, who left office Sunday having served a maximum 10 years.

Iohannis also vowed to fight corruption and build "a powerful nation," as he took an oath Sunday before Parliament, then headed to the presidential palace to formally take over from Basescu.

"Mentalities must be changed," he told lawmakers and dignitaries. "I want a Romania where there is no place for putting on a show" in politics.

He surprisingly defeated Prime Minister Victor Ponta in the Nov. 16 runoff, tapping into anger from thousands of overseas voters who were unable to vote in the first round.

Close ties with U.S.

- Romania was suspected of hosting a CIA secret prison, an allegation that it has denied.
- The U.S. will open a missile defence base in southern Romania, which has angered Russia.

Iohannis received hundreds of thousands of votes from Romanians who work abroad which he called "a triumph for democracy."

His victory sent a feel-good message through the nation of 19 million and he notched up just almost 1.3 million likes on Facebook.

Atypical for Romanian politics, the slow-speaking ethnic German mayor of Sibiu refuses to participate in bitter personal attacks.

He promises good relations with the U.S., the European Union and particularly Germany.

Basescu was credited with a commitment to the anti-corruption fight and has a strong pro-U.S. stance. The U.S. will open a missile defence base in southern Romania, which has angered Russia.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Families urged to hold safe funerals

The radio announcement is chilling and blunt: "If I die, I want the deaths to stop with me."

Dr. Desmond Williams continues: "I want to give my family the permission to request a safe and dignified, medical burial for me."

The announcement is part of a campaign to urge Sierra Leoneans to abandon traditional burial practices, such as relatives touching or washing the dead bodies, that are fuelling the spread of Ebola in the West African country.

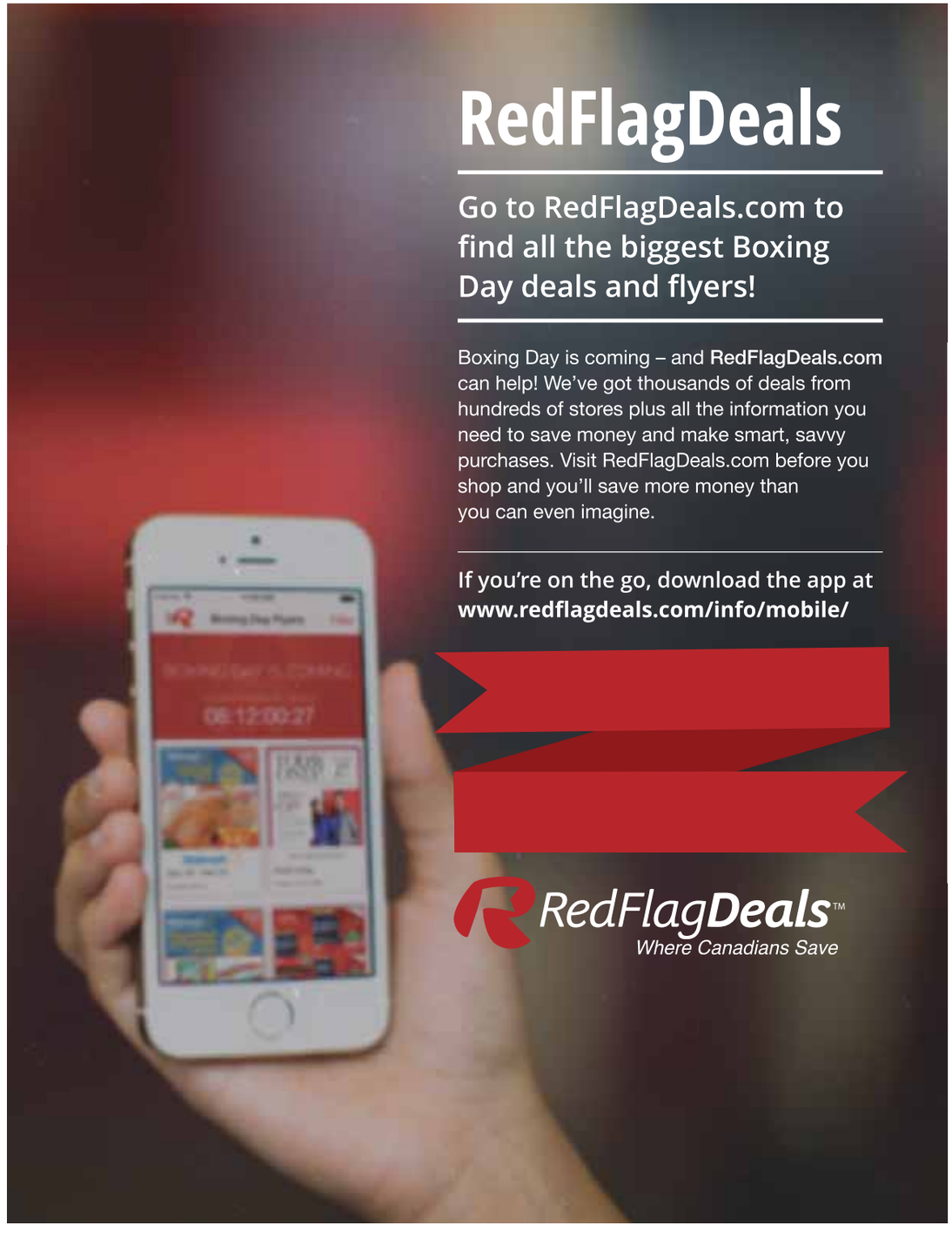
Ebola has killed more than 2,000 people in Sierra Leone, and unsafe burials may be responsible for up to 70 per cent of new infections, say experts.

Officials are resorting to increasingly desperate measures to clamp down on traditional burials in Sierra Leone, where Ebola is now spreading fastest. The head of the Ebola response has even threatened to jail people who prepare the corpses of their loved ones.

Williams, a Sierra Leonean-American doctor who works for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, took to the airwaves last month to encourage people to avoid dangerous burial practices. Now similar pledges have been made by prominent Sierra Leoneans, including pop stars and radio DJs.

But old ways are hard to break. Many believe a traditional burial is necessary to make sure the dead don't return to haunt the living. Funerals are important social occasions in the three most-affected countries, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. People often travel great distances to attend and bodies are typically washed and dressed by relatives or friends.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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Luxury retail war heats up

Shopping. The entrance of high-end American department store chains have got Canadian rivals on the defensive

With the arrival of Nordstrom north of the border in Calgary and Saks Fifth Avenue waiting in the wings, the U.S. department stores are joining an increasingly crowded field of players banking on Canadian fans of high-end goods to spread the love — and wealth — to their shops.

Homegrown brands are bracing for the influx of fresh competition by shoring up or bolstering their operations.

Luxury menswear retailer Harry Rosen has enlarged four of its existing locations and has three major stores opening in 2015, said chairman and CEO Larry Rosen.

"It became obvious to us two, three, four years ago there was going to be an American invasion in our segment of retail, that a number of department stores were going to come here, and we obviously sat back to develop a strategy," Rosen said in an interview.

With Holt Renfrew poised to open new locations and expand existing major stores in the coming years and Quebec-based retailer Simons readying to launch in cities across the country beginning in 2015, Canadian consumers will be rich for choice with the imminent boom in luxury offerings.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada's retail market has gotten a lot more competitive with the entrance of U.S. retailers like Saks Fifth Avenue. RICHARD DREW/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Credit card fraud. Toronto man ordered to pay $1.5M

It took nearly eight years from the time a Toronto man was arrested in a massive credit card fraud scheme, but a U.S. federal judge has figured out how much each victim is owed.

Prosecutors described the man's massive credit-card fraud scheme as high-tech bank robbery — stealing the identities of 38,000 people in order to bilk dozens of banks. So when he was convicted of mail fraud in February 2011, the U.S. government began the arduous task of figuring out just how much each victim was owed.

Years later, following the government's petition to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a federal judge ordered Adekunle Adetiloye to pay about $1.5 million US in restitution and forfeiture. Adetiloye is appealing the Dec. 8 judgment.

What isn't clear is whether anyone will see the restitution payments, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Nick Chase.

Adetiloye's 18-year prison sentence, issued in January 2012, capped a lengthy international investigation into fake debt-collection agencies. Bank officials, investigators and prosecutors called it one of the most complex schemes perpetrated in the financial industry. It took nearly eight years to investigate and litigate, including the restitution debate.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saudi Arabia. Low oil prices not a 'conspiracy'

Saudi Arabia's oil chief on Sunday dismissed allegations that his kingdom conspired to bring down oil prices in order to harm other countries and told a summit of Arab energy leaders that he was confident the market would stabilize.

"I want to say from this podium that talk about a Saudi conspiracy has no basis of accuracy at all and points to a misunderstanding," Saudi Petroleum Minister Ali Naimi said in the United Arab Emirates capital of Abu Dhabi, where he was addressing the Arab Energy Conference, a gathering held every four years. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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VOICES

ONE ARENA, SLIGHTLY USED

Apparently they don't build them like they used to: The Canadian Tire Centre is not even two decades old, yet the Senators are already looking to replace it. Does this stem from a genuine need, or are new projects just sexier?

STEVE COLLINS
ottawa@metronews.ca

Perhaps the biggest surprise in the Ottawa Senators' surprise proposal to potentially build a new home at LeBreton Flats was the suddenly downgraded status of their current digs, the Canadian Tire Centre.

Built for $188 million in 1996, the facility, says team owner Eugene Melnyk, is already apparently starting to get a bit clapped out.

"This building, believe it or not, was not built to last 30, 40 years like some people think," he said last week. "I mean, we spend a lot of money to keep this building looking the way it is, but … you have to build a new one, eventually — I hope in my lifetime."

Time flies. Not even two decades in, and our venerable Palladium-Corel Centre-Scotiabank Place-CTC is already well on its way to mothballs? Certainly whatever we called it, the suburban facility has always been a pain to get to, and even without knowing much about the new proposal, the appeal of a downtown arena for sports fans, handy to walking and transit, is easy to see.

The National Capital Commission could probably do worse for an anchor of the next phase of LeBreton's development, although it appears to have no shortage of suitors for the prime downtown land, and has expanded the deadline to see requests for qualification until January.

But where the development would leave the old facility and environs in Kanata is a big question — and really, just when was it that the old facility got old? I was last inside this spring to see Black Sabbath, each member of which is considerably older than the arena. Both band and venue seemed to be holding up perfectly well under the circumstances.

Such a short lifespan estimate for a sports venue might also be of some concern to a city that just signed a 30-year deal with the Ottawa Sports Entertainment Group to refurbish and run Lansdowne Park. I certainly hope that when the park reverts to public ownership at the end of 30-year period, it won't be just in time to shut it down again.

And it doesn't bode well for other facilities like the Ottawa Stadium, which spent years without a major tenant and is in need of an estimated $10 to $30 million in repairs. Built in 1993, it's even older than the poor old Canadian Tire Centre. Yet the Can-Am League's Champions seem to find it suitable for their 2015 move-in.

It's possible that the decrepitude of the CTC is being slightly exaggerated in favour of the next big thing. For a time when city politicians were advocating for the OSEG deal at Lansdowne, it seemed to become mandatory to describe the old park as "crumbling." Sometimes when you're selling the shiny new project, it's useful to contrast it with the less-sexy old one.

There were certainly no public musings that the useful life of the CTC was coming to a close even last year, when Melnyk still had plans to expand operations with a new casino. Has so much changed?

A formal proposal still has to be submitted, and when it is submitted it should be judged not just on the basis of the new venue the team might develop, but as part of the development of LeBreton as a whole.

Your Ottawa

Piano man keeps warm in tuque

Oscar, a bronze sculpture of famed jazz pianist Oscar Peterson, by Ruth Abernathy, sports a maple leaf tuque outside the national Arts Centre on a chilly Sunday night. SEAN MCKIBBON/METRO

SEE YOUR SHOT HERE: Send us high-resolution snaps of your city to readers@metronews.ca

Upcoming

Public invited to check out Bhat Boy's latest

The City of Ottawa Public Art Program will officially unveil a newly completed project by local artist Bhat Boy on Monday at 10 a.m., in the lobby of 1500 St. Laurent Blvd. The painting, entitled The Spirit of OC Transpo, is a 15-foot wide panoramic view of Ottawa on a starry winter's night. It is filled with recognizable buildings and city landmarks whimsically linked together by roads and rails carrying OC Transpo vehicles from the past, present and future. The painting was commissioned through the City of Ottawa Public Art Program as part of the renovation of OC Transpo's Administration Building. METRO

Bell Capital Cup kicks off on Sunday

The Bell Capital Cup returns to Ottawa next Sunday. The world's premier atom and peewee hockey tournament will showcase great minor hockey action across the city. The tournament gets underway on Sunday, Dec. 28, at the Bell Sensplex with Bell Capital Cup Fanfest and Esso Friendly Games, and will run through Friday, Jan. 2. Local hockey fans are encouraged to come out and support these young athletes, as admission is free at all Bell Capital Cup events. New to the Bell Capital Cup this year, Sledge Hockey Eastern Ontario will showcase their sport with games scheduled at the Bell Sensplex on Dec. 28 and the Richcraft Sensplex on Dec. 29.

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SCENE 2

Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Iggy Azalea ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Hackers threaten exposé if Azalea doesn't end Banks feud

We're apparently officially in the age of hacker demands, as those loveable upstarts in Anonymous — the ones with the Guy Fawkes masks and all — have jumped into Iggy Azalea's feud with Azalea Banks, demanding that Azalea make a big public apology to Banks and the #ICantBreathe protesters or suffer the consequences.

Just what consequences, you might ask?

The group claims to have a sex tape featuring the singer and are threatening to release stills from it if she does not comply. Way to raise the debate, guys.

They went on to threaten, "We have so much s— on you, your scandal would be bigger than Bill Cosby's," which seems kind of impossible just purely on a fame level. Unless there's millions of people out there who think of Azalea as a paragon of wholesomeness and morality that I don't know about.

Last week, Azalea launched a new volley in her ongoing feud with Banks, calling her "a bigot" and "a miserable, angry human being" on Twitter. Fun times.

From Ross to a Kardashian! Schwimmer returns to TV

David Schwimmer

Would you believe that Friends star David Schwimmer hasn't had a TV project since the hit sitcom ended 10 years ago? I mean, sure he's done guest spots on 30 Rock and Lisa Kudrow's Web Therapy, but a regular gig? Nope. So what could lure Schwimmer, who's been sticking to film as an actor and a director, back to TV? Apparently the chance to play Kim Kardashian's dad. Schwimmer has signed on to play Robert Kardashian in Ryan Murphy's miniseries about the O.J. Simpson trial, American Crime Story. So welcome back, Dave.

Life not so Marvel-ous for oh-so-grown-up Corden

Into the Woods star James Corden is one busy man. While he already has a thriving film, television and theatre career — and a young family at home — he's also taking over for Craig Ferguson at The Late Late Show next year. So he obviously doesn't have time consider a role in one of Marvel's big superhero movies. Which is fine, since he wouldn't want one, anyway. "I don't think I'm talking myself out of a big Marvel franchise," he tells Metro. "If you're an actor and you're in those movies, what is your day's acting? I find it strange."

Also, for any grown-up fans of Marvel movies, Corden thinks you need to grow up. "I spend almost no time thinking about The Avengers. I literally could not spend less of my day thinking about it, and I'm constantly amazed by the volume of adults who do," he says. "Each to their own, and I wish them well, but I mean, it's preposterous."

James Corden

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Franco my dear, The Interview is worth a damn

Review. Ballsy James Franco's killer instincts carry mockingly good flick yanked by Sony

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York

James Franco and Seth Rogen in The Interview. CONTRIBUTED

Yes, there have been terrorist threats over a Seth Rogen movie with a Guinness-level number of anus jokes. The Interview — a very filthy comedy about the attempted assassination of North Korean despot Kim Jong-un — has had its release cancelled for fears of threats on theatres showing it — a lot of brouhaha over a very silly film, one with a peerlessly silly James Franco turn and lots and lots of Katy Perry. As satires go, this isn't Dr. Strangelove, even if it ends in a ballsier cinematic act of war. It's a bunch of clowns seeing how far they can go in mocking the humourless, just to see what will happen. How could they have known the battle line was basically nonexistent?

The Interview isn't even the first movie to take out a North Korean leader. The world survived Team America, which turned a puppet Kim Jong-il into a cockroach. Here, his tyrannical, babyfaced son (Randall Park) becomes the target of CIA lust after he agrees to a chat with Franco's David Skylark, a lowest common denominator infotainment god. Before he and his producer, Aaron (Rogen, who also co-directed), leave for the dictatorship, they agree — without really fully understanding the gravity of their situation — to perform a covert form of poisoning.

The funny thing about North Korea — or sympathizers, or whatever the hell the rogue hacker team known as Guardians of Peace are — getting up in arms over The Interview is that Park's Kim winds up being unexpectedly semi-sympathetic. Meekly introducing himself to Franco's Skylark, Kim's a superfan who blurts out how nervous he is to meet one of his favourite TV stars. He can't hide his obsession with American junk culture, including reciting Perry's Wide Awake while in tears, or keep from detailing the mental abuse laid on him by his late father. He and Skylark bond over being despised by those who view them as dangerous for culture — and, in Kim's case, the human race.

There are more twists to come, some not so charitable toward its real-life monster. But The Interview grants Kim more humanity than the news ever has, all the while never holding back on exposing (well, mocking) the grim realities of life above South Korea. Everything's building to a Frost/Nixon-style tête-à-tête that spills over into an outsized action climax. Rogen and company's glee in going really far is apparent; you can see them bowling over the first time they saw the crazy things they come up with materialize on-screen.

It's all a joke, if one that evidently doesn't go over well when described to humorless political leaders. And yet the funniest part isn't its cajones, or even that a film about idiots attempting a political killing is a dumb comedy that may have sparked an international incident. It's Franco. When he tries to be funny Franco's really, really funny. Skylark is a super-manchild, one caught in a cycle of childlike euphoria, insecurity and betrayal. His bromance with Kim Jong-un may be the most intense movie relationship of the year, and of course one that fiddles winkingly with the real-life questioning of the star's sexuality. The Interview isn't worth dying for, but more contraband needs someone calling John Kerry an "oak tree-looking f—."

Review

The Interview

Directors. Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg

Stars. James Franco, Seth Rogen

● ● ● ● ○

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Ebooks

Wild

By. Cheryl Strayed

Kindle/iBooks/Kobo

● ● ● ● ○

Strayed's skillfully described account of her 2,663 mile wilderness trek along the Californian coast is a proper journey, full of interesting characters and self-made calamity, one that captures the adventurous landscape enough to transport you to her side. What begins as a dubious act of personal growth does indeed lead to a sophisticated and compelling life lesson by the journey's end.

App

Deck Charlie Brown's tree

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Video game

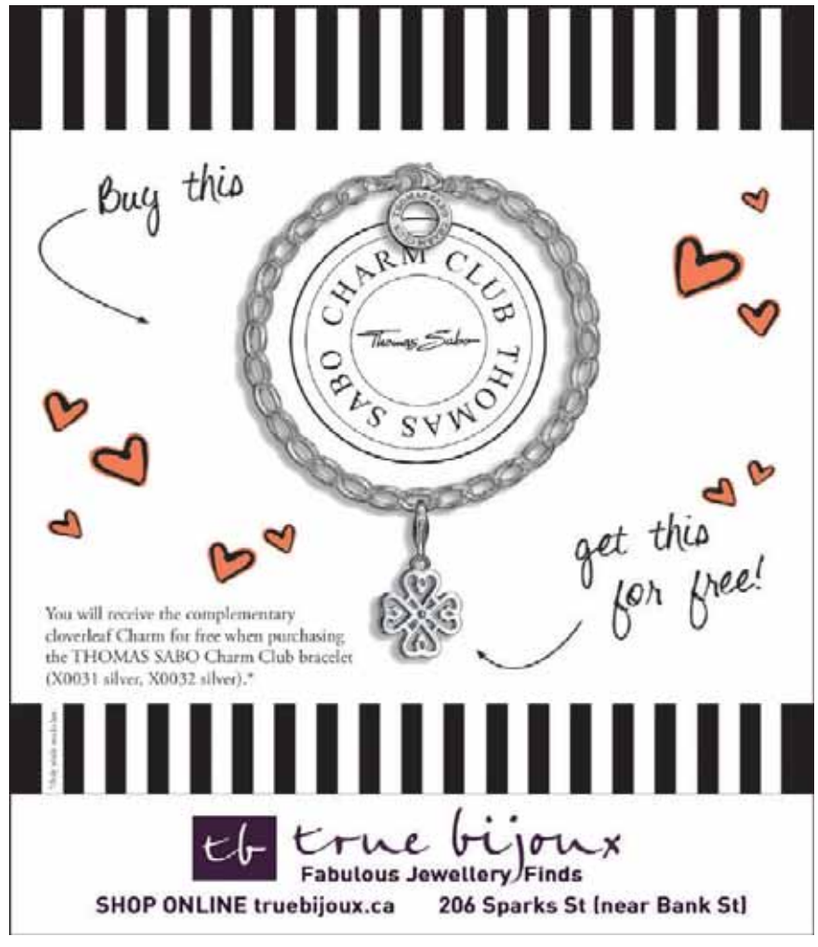
Name. Little Big Planet 3

For. PS3/PS4

Rated. Everyone

● ● ● ● ○

It's the new gadgets — a gun that fires teleporter bullets and a fan that pulls and blows structures — that introduce fresh possibilities and make this third outing a compelling challenge all over again. Hugh Laurie joins Stephen Fry to maintain the game's affable banter.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LIFE 3

A good time to smarten up

Money. With another year behind us, this is when you should take stock of your finances and fix whatever isn't working for you

GAIL VAZ-OXLADE
Gail blogs daily at gailvazoxlade.com

Is consumer debt killing your budget? Then deal with it! ISTOCK

OK, it's December. Do you have plans to take what you learned this year and do it differently next year?

Y'know what they say: Stupid is doing the same thing over and over and expecting to get a different result. So are you planning to keep being stupid in 2015 or is next year the year you smarten up and take control?

It's easy to ignore the details of our financial lives when everything is rushing past us. And while this month seems like the busiest of all, if you want next year to be a strong, healthy one financially, it's time to stop and take a breath.

What better time to check in on your financial progress than just before the turn of a new year? Although the glow of the holiday season may be bright enough to distract you from past mistakes, living in ignorance of what's worked, or what hasn't, is no way to get off to a fresh start. If you want to make sure you're in control of your money as you head into the new year, take these steps.

1. Do a net worth statement.
Assess how you feel about what you've accomplished financially this year. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being ecstatic), how do you feel about where you are? What's the biggest financial concern you have right now? What one thing do you want to accomplish before another year rolls past?

2. Review your budget.
How did the numbers shake out this year, and what should you tweak for next?

Often, as we progress through the year and get comfortable living on a budget, we also get complacent and costs start to rise. Look at your last two months' spending to see if it is still in line with your planning. Is it time to do some trimming? Have prices risen in some areas of your budget, indicating that you need to trim other areas to rebalance? Are there other changes that have taken place since you did your budget that you need to incorporate?

3. You don't have a budget? How's that working for you?
If you're sick and tired of not knowing where your money has been going, it's time to grab a cuppa, a calculator, six months' worth of credit card and bank statements and an Excel spreadsheet. (A pen and pad work, too.) Do the spending analysis. Make a budget.

4. Recalculate your debt level.
If your consumer credit payments are eating up more than 15 per cent of your budget, you've got too much debt.

Some people find it's hard to even imagine being debt-free. But you can be. It may take another job to earn the extra money to get out of debt, but if that's what it takes, you can do it.

Are you on target to be debt-free?

5. Assess your emergency savings.
It takes small steps to get to where you want to be. Having six months' worth of savings for essential expenses socked away isn't a *nice*-to-have, it's a *gotta*-have.

6. Check your retirement plan.
Make sure you're taking advantage of a retirement plan at work and the savings-matching program it may offer. No plan at work? Then you better have an individual retirement savings plan.

Did you meet your savings goal this year? No? Answer me this: How will you eat when it comes time to hang up your work gloves? How will you keep a roof over your head?

If you think your kids are going to take care of you, how would you do right now if your mom and dad showed up on your doorstep?

7. Quantify your investment return.
How are you putting your money to work for you? Are those investment choices you made still working for you?

Are you well diversified? Diversification helps you weather investment volatility because all your money isn't tied up in one sector, type of investment or geographic location.

If your adviser hasn't reviewed your portfolio with you yet this year, get on the horn.

This would be a good time to adjust the investments that may have fallen out of whack with your goals and tolerance for risk.

8. Review your insurance coverage.
Do you have insurance for cars, property, life and disability? If you think insurance is a waste of money, how would you cope if the worst did happen?

How would your family cope? As if a life disaster isn't bad enough, would it be fair to them to be wiped out financially at the same time?

It's easy to put off looking at your money. Put it off. Put it off. Put it off. But you'll get no peace of mind from not knowing where you stand. Better to buckle down and do the detail.

Update your will

- Do you need to review your will this year? How about your powers of attorney for both personal care and money? And have you named a guardian for your children?
- Have you reviewed this documentation in the past two years, or since your last major life change (marriage, divorce, moving, birth of a child)?
- If not, this is a good time to dig out the paperwork and have a look to see if it still meets your needs.

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Work. Early-morning disco better than the gym to jump-start your day

Hundreds attend a dance party in downtown London. EDOUARD GUIHAIRE/AFP

At dawn, before commuting to his job in London's Canary Wharf business district, 26-year-old Nathaniel Hone joins hundreds of revellers at a dance party fuelled only by coffee and smoothies.

At the end of an alleyway in trendy Bethnal Green, a line of morning revellers is waiting patiently at the entrance of the Oval Space, a 6,000-square-foot venue with the feel of an old warehouse. Welcome to Morning Gloryville, an alcohol-free, all-ages disco.

"Morning Gloryville started a year and a half ago. We only had about 26 people at the first event," said co-founder Samantha Moyo, 26. "Now we're attracting 1,000 people per event, and we're in 16 cities all over the world," including Bangalore, New York, Paris and Tokyo.

Babies and children can party for free — provided the infants wear earmuffs against the pulsing club music.

Moyo describes it as "basically partying without drink and drugs."

Instead of beer or cocktails, the bar offers smoothies such as the Incredible Hulk, a green concoction made of apple, banana, lemon, spinach and spirulina — an algae touted as a nutritious dietary supplement.

DJ Miles Metric, wearing a skin-tight hot pink outfit, is behind his turntables as the dancers begin to arrive.

Some are dressed in pyjamas, while others are in colourful outfits, carnival fashion or in fancy dress as tigers, bears and horses. One group wears sneakers, shorts and tank tops.

"Good morning! Are you ready?" one of the organizers shouts into the microphone. "Yes!" reply 100 enthusiastic voices, quickly drowned out by the blaring music.

Kaye, 35, wearing gold sequinned pants, neon pink shoes and rainbow butterfly wings on her back, admitted it was difficult to wake up at 6 a.m. to go dancing.

"Everybody's wearing fancy dress, it's colourful, we're having coffee, smoothies, we're having a good time," she said. "It made my day better already."

AFP

Teaching through the eyes of Homer, Bart, Lisa and Marge

Education. University professors are using The Simpsons in the classroom for courses on everything from literature to sociology

Richard Pioreck uses The Simpsons in his English courses. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bart and Lisa Simpson have been in elementary school for 25 years. But that hasn't stopped them from showing up on college campuses.

Universities across the country are using satirical references from The Simpsons to grab students' attention and convey lessons in literature and all manner of popular culture.

"If the references are important enough to be lampooned by The Simpsons, these works must be important cultural milestones," says Hofstra University adjunct English professor Richard Pioreck, who has been incorporating the denizens of Springfield into his courses for about a decade.

He currently teaches a course about the Broadway theatre and how The Simpsons have embraced various musicals and plays. Next semester, he shifts to an online literature course titled The D'oh of Homer, which includes readings from Edgar Allan Poe's The Raven and The Fall of the House of Usher, and Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol — all referenced in Simpsons episodes.

In recent years, other universities have had courses focused on the prime-time show, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last week. Those universities include Oswego State University in New York and San Jose State University in California.

Longtime executive producer Al Jean says he's not surprised professors have embraced the program.

"Some people may think we are very vulgar, but then they find there is a lot of warmth and emotion and many people are surprised at the intelligence of some of the jokes," he says.

Pioreck says he decided to use the show after his daughter's friend passed an exam on The Devil and Daniel Webster by watching a Simpsons episode that focused on the story.

He found the sitcom usually aims for more than just the easy punchlines, with writers layering the plotlines with humour that can be appreciated by lowbrow, middlebrow and highbrow audiences alike.

For example, in one episode that parodied A Streetcar Named Desire (A Streetcar Named Marge), the dynamics of Homer and Marge Simpson's marriage are deftly illustrated through a comparison to the relationship of the couple in the play, Stella and Stanley.

"The Simpsons do a great deal of parodying, whether it's a complete script or a number here or there," Pioreck says. "Quite often, they choose family relationships; what makes a man a success is one of the things that we pursue. And you can see what happens to Homer. Even though it looks like he's not a good father, he steps up and he comes through in the end."

Jean acknowledges a theme in many episodes is the comparison of the Montgomery Burns character — the miserly owner of Springfield's nuclear power plant — to the lead character in the movie Citizen Kane, Charles Foster Kane.

"Mr. Burns ... he doesn't have fulfilment in his life even though he's the richest person in town," Pioreck says. "Here are two people who have it all, they have more money than they know what to do with and yet they're not happy. Homer has no money, but has friends and family."

Incredibly, at least one Hofstra student confesses she'd never seen the sitcom before signing up for the Simpsons-Broadway course.

Elizabeth Sarian, a 21-year-old music performance major, says she signed up because of her interest in Broadway, not the cartoon. Still, she says, the show "really does teach you a lot from watching it."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pop culture

The Simpsons

"Teachers need to keep things fresh," says Denise DuVernay, an adjunct English professor at St. Xavier University in Chicago, co-author of the book The Simpsons in the Classroom: Embiggening the Learning Experience with the Wisdom of Springfield.

"They need to reach students however they can. And using The Simpsons to grab their attention, I think, is brilliant," she says. "Fighting against pop culture isn't going to do anyone any good."

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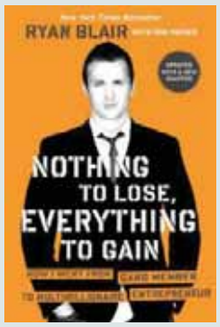
Advice



Hard work crucial for entrepreneurs

It's a story familiar to millions of workers around the world: You have an idea that you think would be a great business or product, but you're not sure where to start.

"The only time I really had to daydream was at work," says Ryan Blair, CEO of ViSalus, a global healthy lifestyle company, and author of the book Nothing to Lose, Everything to Gain. "There's no such thing as balance — there are 24 hours in a day and most people waste most of them."

We asked Blair for tips on how to juggle having a day job with a budding entrepreneurial career:

• **Don't quit your job:** "When you start to see results, then you can think about quitting. I started my first company while I had a job and I got my first customers that way."

• **Keep a journal:** "Whenever I'm early in the process (of an idea), I'd just start writing about it. I have a venture capital fund and the first thing I do when considering investing in an idea is sketch it out in my journal. Then I'll start talking to people to see if it will work."

• **Put in the effort:** Don't think that juggling both work and your entrepreneurial project won't take sacrifice. "In the beginning, I'd wake up early at 4 a.m. and go work on my company before heading to work. Most people don't put in that time."

• **Teach yourself new skills:** For people without a strong business background, Blair says it is important to fill in the gaps. "Read books," he says. "That's how I learned it. If you really want to learn, you can read blogs, the trades, social media. You have to self-educate."

METRO NEWS

Use social media to find dream job

Work. Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook can help you promote your skills and make valuable contacts in your chosen field

MARIANNE HAYES
Metro News in New York City

Employers and recruiters are increasingly using social media to find and investigate potential employees. ISTOCK

These days, it's hard to find someone who isn't on social media. It comes as no surprise that a 2014 Pew study found 74 per cent of online adults use social networking sites. But are you leveraging social media to take your career to the next level?

According to a recent Jobvite survey of 2,000 recruiters, more than half said they'd reconsidered a candidate based on their social profile. And 94 per cent use LinkedIn to recruit employees.

So how can you best use social media to land the job of your dreams?

We asked Caity Kauffman, social media and digital marketing manager for the Tampa Bay Lightning. At 25, Kauffman is living proof that understanding social media pays off. She used connections made on Twitter to secure her first job out of college. Since then, she's cultivated a loyal social media following and is considered an up-and-coming millennial voice in Tampa Bay.

Here are her most valuable tips for boosting your career through social media.

Tweet your resumé

It may sound a little out there, but tweeting your resumé can be a great way to get exposure. For Kauffman, doing this led to a job producing a Sirius XM radio show. (Thanks to a retweet.)

"I actually gave the same advice to a girlfriend in Philadelphia. She tweeted out her resumé and an ad agency found her and hired her as a junior copywriter."

Creating an online portfolio of your work is another little thing that can have a big impact. It's also easy to promote on social media and paints a more complete picture of your skill set, especially since a resumé is typically only one page long.

Watch what you post

When it comes to breaking into a new industry, be mindful of your tweets and status updates. Think of yourself as a business in the sense that you need to remember your audience. Kauffman recommends posting things that are related to the industry you want to be in.

"If you're posting about random things all the time, no one will see you as someone who's already in the business," she says.

Long before landing her job in the NHL, Kauffman was using social media to post news and other tidbits about the industry. She learned everything she could about the field, posting and retweeting relevant information she could find. She even paid her own way to the NHL draft to network in person.

"Start acting like you're already in the business, even though you're not," she says. "A lot of times, people can't tell the difference."

Reach out to new contacts (without being creepy)

Got your eye on a potential new contact you're itching to connect with? The last thing you want to do is come on too strong, which can spoil the relationship before it even begins. Begin by following the person on social media, gradually commenting and retweeting. This opens the door for some interaction.

"Engage with them naturally, as if they have nothing to offer you," Kauffman says. "Once they start tweeting back and you have a couple of back-and-forths, I would send them a DM or email if possible."

The worst thing you can do at this point is ask them how they can help you. Instead, just ask them to grab coffee so that you can learn from their experience.

If you're eager and motivated, most people will want to help you. So focus on building relationships before you start asking for favours.

Update your profile

LinkedIn is definitely the most-used social media platform when it comes to job searching. Kauffman really drives home the importance of making sure your profile is completely filled out all the time. Every time your job changes, make certain you update it with your full job description.

"I also accept (connection requests) from people I don't know if they're in my industry," says Kauffman. "And I always accept recruiters — you never know what's going to happen, and those are the people who are always looking for talent."

Another good idea is to link your social media profiles to your own website or online portfolio. This gives an employer a chance to research you more and build an emotional connection. In the end, this gives you the chance to sell yourself even more.

Be searchable

• According to Caity Kauffman, social media and digital marketing manager for the Tampa Bay Lightning, a lot of students new to the job force hide from Google. She suggests doing the opposite.

• "If I'm trying to look up a possible intern and I can't find them, that makes it look like they either haven't done anything or they're hiding something," she says.

• Creating a basic website can be an excellent way of getting your name to rank in Google. It also pulls double duty by showcasing your talents and skills. In short, when potential employers Google you, you want good things to pop up.

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Holiday Roasted Pork Tenderloin, shown here in its Garlic Potato Purée variation, serves 8. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

One cut of meat, three very unique flavours

Holiday Roasted Pork Tenderloin. If you have picky eaters at your table, here is a recipe with variations that will please everyone

Though delicious and tender, pork tenderloin also is neutral enough to pair wonderfully with numerous ingredients. It's also easy to cook.

Here are three versions: a tangy butternut squash pesto, a garlic-rich potato purée, and a glaze of cranberries and apple cider. Add some fresh bread and a salad and you've got a great holiday meal that you can repeat multiple times without ever feeling in a rut.

Holiday Roasted Pork Tenderloin

Ingredients

- Two 1-lb pork tenderloins
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper

1. Heat the oven to 400 F.

2. Brush or rub olive oil over the surface of each pork tenderloin. Sprinkle each on all sides with salt and pepper. Place the tenderloins in a small roasting pan and roast for 30 minutes, or until the centre of the tenderloins reaches 145 F. Slice and serve topped with one of the variations below.

Butternut Squash Pesto

In a food processor, pulse 2 cups of peeled and cubed butternut squash until the pieces are very finely diced. Stir 1/4 cup olive oil into the squash, then spread the mixture on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 400 F for 12 to 15 minutes, or until tender, but not mushy. Lift the foil off the pan and place the squash in the freezer to chill for 10 minutes. Once chilled, in a medium bowl stir together the squash, 2 tablespoons lime juice, 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro, 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil, 1/4 cup grated manchego cheese, and salt and black pepper, to taste. Spoon over the pork and top with toasted almonds.

Garlic Potato Purée

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine 1 cup half-and-half with 3 garlic cloves and 2 bay leaves. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, in a covered medium saucepan fitted with a steamer basket and filled with 1 inch of water, steam 2 pounds of peeled and cubed russet potatoes for 15 minutes, or until very tender. Pass the potatoes through a food mill or ricer and into a large bowl. Remove the bay leaves from the half-and-half and discard. In a blender, purée the half-and-half with the garlic until completely smooth. Gradually whisk the half-and-half into the potatoes, allowing it to be absorbed before adding more. Whisk in 6 tablespoons butter, then season with salt and black pepper. Sprinkle with chopped fresh thyme, then serve alongside the pork.

Cranberry Cider Glaze

In a small saucepan over medium-high, combine 2 cups apple cider with 1 cup fresh cranberries. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, until thickened and reduced to 1 cup. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, in an oiled skillet over medium-high heat, cook several slices of prosciutto until crisp. When the pork tenderloin is cooked, serve covered with the glaze and garnished with shards of crisped prosciutto.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Iginla lifts Avs past Red Wings

Jarome Iginla scored in the ninth shootout round to lift the Colorado Avalanche to a 2-1 victory over the Detroit Red Wings on Sunday night.

Iginla got a wrist shot past Petr Mrazek, who had turned away six straight Avalanche shooters. Nathan MacKinnon and Matt Duchene also scored in the tiebreaker as Colorado ended a three-game road trip with five points.

Gustav Nyquist and Tomas Tatar had shootout goals for Detroit, which fell to 1-7 this season in the tiebreaker.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Oilers fall short against Stars

Shawn Horcoff scored the winner in the eighth round of the shootout and added a goal in regulation time as the Dallas Stars came from behind to win their fourth straight game, defeating the struggling Edmonton Oilers 6-5 on Sunday.

Tyler Seguin had two goals and an assist and Erik Cole and Jamie Benn also scored for the Stars (14-13-5).

Taylor Hall and Mark Arcobello each had two goals and Teddy Purcell had the other for the Oilers (7-20-7), who blew a 5-2 lead in the game.

The Oilers have now lost seven straight and a distressing 18 of their last 19 games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

Raptors dump Knicks for sixth straight victory

On one memorable play Sunday afternoon, Kyle Lowry bolted to save a loose ball, and was running so hard he ran halfway up one of the exit tunnels. He needed to grab onto a railing to slow himself down.

Lowry, who's built his game on hustle and hard work, was at his bulldog-best, scoring 22 points and doling out nine assists to lift the Raptors to their sixth consecutive victory — a 118-108 win over the struggling New York Knicks.

Toronto (22-6) improved to 14-3 at Air Canada Centre. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Steelers defenders Cameron Heyward, top, and Jason Worilds sack Chiefs quarterback Alex Smith in Pittsburgh on Sunday. DON WRIGHT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Retooled Steelers back in playoffs

NFL. Pittsburgh beats Kansas City to earn its first post-season berth in three seasons

The Pittsburgh Steelers spent two years rebuilding themselves on the fly, a necessary process that frequently looked more erratic than inspiring.

Consider the project nearly complete. The surging Steelers are heading back to January.

Ben Roethlisberger passed for 220 yards and a touchdown, Le'Veon Bell added a score and the Steelers locked up a post-season berth with a methodical 20-12 win over the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday.

"It was such a sense of urgency this week, knowing what was at stake," defensive end Cam Heyward said. "I just thought we answered the challenge."

Pittsburgh (10-5) faces Cincinnati next week for the AFC North title. Either way, the Steelers are in the playoffs for the first time since Tim Tebow and Denver stunned the defending AFC champions in the wild-card round three years ago.

That group was on the tail end of a stretch that saw Pittsburgh put together three Super Bowl appearances in six years. This group is decidedly younger. The Steelers won their third straight and are 7-2 since an October loss at Cleveland left them at 3-3.

Those days suddenly seem long ago. Pittsburgh kept the Chiefs in check behind a resurgent pass rush energized by the return of James Harrison.

The 36-year-old linebacker missed last week's win over Atlanta with a knee problem. He returned to pick up 1.5 of Pittsburgh's season-high six sacks.

"We're headed in the right direction," Harrison said.

The Chiefs? Not so much. Alex Smith passed for a season-high 311 yards, but Kansas City lost for the fourth time in five games. The Chiefs need to beat San Diego next week and get some help to make it back to the playoffs for a second straight year under Andy Reid.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Around the league

Falcons 30, Saints 14. Julio Jones returned from a hip injury to catch seven passes for 107 yards, and Atlanta (6-9) remained in playoff contention.

Panthers 17, Browns 13. Cam Newton threw for one touchdown and ran for another as Carolina (6-8-1) took over sole possession of first place in the NFC South. The victory sets up the winner-take-all showdown next Sunday at Atlanta.

Cowboys QB Tony Romo
TOM PENNINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

Packers 20, Buccaneers 3. Aaron Rodgers threw for 318 yards and one touchdown to help the Packers clinch a playoff berth. Green Bay closes the regular season at home against Detroit, and a victory will give the Packers another NFC North crown.

Patriots 17, Jets 16. Jonas Gray scored the go-ahead touchdown on a one-yard run early in the fourth quarter after the Patriots intercepted Geno Smith, and New England clinched a first-round playoff bye.

Cowboys 42, Colts 7. Dallas ended a four-year playoff drought Sunday in a dominating fashion with Tony Romo throwing four touchdown passes. The Cowboys also won the NFC East.

4 SPORTS

Wounded Skrtel saves Liverpool from shame

Tie at the 97th. One man down, Reds find a late equalizer against Arsenal at Anfield

Liverpool's Martin Skrtel, left, celebrates scoring a late equalizer against Arsenal at Anfield on Sunday in Liverpool, England. PAUL ELLIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Liverpool required an injury-time goal to avoid a morale-sapping defeat to Arsenal on Sunday in a Premier League match that exposed both teams' frailties as they struggle to bridge the gap to the top four.

Wearing a bandage to cover up a nasty head wound, Martin Skrtel leapt high at a corner to score a powerful header in the seventh minute of stoppage time and rescue a 2-2 draw for 10-man Liverpool at Anfield.

Liverpool dominated the game but again lacked a cutting edge in the continued absence of injured striker Daniel Sturridge, with Philippe Coutinho's 45th-minute opener the only reward for its effervescent build-up play until Skrtel's late intervention.

Despite being overrun, Arsenal came from behind through goals by France internationals Mathieu Debuchy and Olivier Giroud from the team's first two efforts on target. The visitors should have gone on to take maximum points because Liverpool substitute Fabio Borini was sent off at the start of second-half stoppage time for two quick bookings.

"There's no doubt we deserved to win the game, our performance level was outstanding," Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers said. "Our performance today was better than when we won here last (season) 5-1."

Last season's runner-up, Liverpool is in 10th place and nine points behind fourth-place West Ham heading toward the mid-point of the season.

A late goal was decisive in Sunday's other game, with Adam Johnson volleying home a 90th-minute winner for Sunderland in a 1-0 victory at northeast rival Newcastle. It sealed an unprecedented fourth straight derby win for Sunderland.

"It makes it a very special Christmas for us," said Sunderland manager Gus Poyet, whose team climbed four points clear of the relegation zone. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Juniors' take on 'friendly'

Sweden's Jacob de la Rosa, centre, gets the sandwich treatment from Team Canada's Frederick Gauthier, left, and Madison Bowey in the first period of an exhibition game in Ottawa, Sunday. Go to metronews.ca for the final result and full coverage of the game. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Colleagues and employers may need convincing that what you are planning is going to work but it won't bother you because you have self-belief. It'll to be a great week for starting projects.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You like surprises and that's just as well because they will be arriving every few minutes over the next couple of days. Be adventurous. Be outrageous.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Keep your wits about you today or you could lose out financially. Someone you think is a friend is actually a secret rival, so don't don't accept what they tell you without checking it out first.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
This will be an interesting time and many strange things are likely to happen over the next few days. Chances are you will meet people who challenge your worldview.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Break free of habits that hold you back from realizing your potential and today's new moon will help. Look at the big picture over the next 24 hours.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This is one of the best times of the year for trying new things. Make the most of today's new moon to branch out creatively and do things you never have.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
A personal issue that has been causing you problems will take a turn for the better. The most important thing is that you don't try to hang on to what is now moving out of your life.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Wherever you go and whatever you do today you will meet people who inspire you to be bigger and better. You will also, in your own small way, be an inspiration to others.

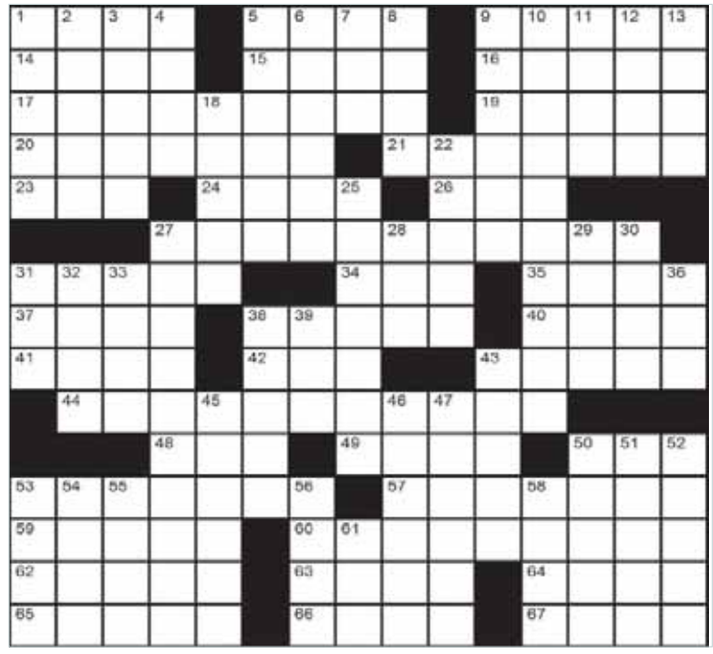
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Unexpected changes may unsettle you today but it won't be long before you regain your balance and find ways to make them pay.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Today's new moon in your sign makes this one of the very best times of the year, especially for creative endeavors and affairs of the heart. Tackle life head on.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Someone you are close to is likely to do something that shocks you but you should have seen it coming. Why not show how much they mean to you with unconditional support?

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will get the red carpet treatment wherever you go today. But you cannot possibly accept every invitation that comes your way, so be selective.

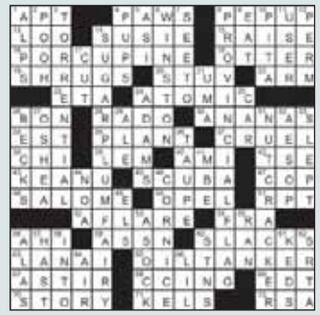
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. "__ Christmas" by Wham!
5. Father-in-law for Esau
9. "We Three Kings of Orient Are" part: "_ __ of wonder..."
14. Noted volcano
15. Deviate
16. Elbow: French
17. 2008 Canadian short film starring Jonathan Torrens about Christmas foliage that retaliates
19. Bit ___ blood (Tension)
20. Festive decoration
21. Gongs
23. Select
24. Centimetre, e.g.
26. Celebrity's agt.
27. Manitoba: __ __ Provincial Park
31. Handles on swords
34. Be in debt
35. Wash-and-__
37. In the blink __ eye: 2 wds.
38. Like porridge bits
40. Mr. Foley
41. Ancient's 53
42. Drollness
43. Dancer Mr. Kelly's
44. As per #60-Across... Kevin's mom played by Canadian actress Catherine O'Hara, Kate __
48. Green, for one
49. Max __ (World Chess Champion of 1935 to 1937)
50. Telly-watcher's network
53. Tropical destinations
57. Hanukkah candelabrum
59. Eye-related prefix
60. 1990 Christmas-time movie comedy starring Macaulay Culkin: 2 wds.
62. Christmas tune: "Do You Hear What _ __?"
63. Enthusiastic
64. Chop the veggies
65. "___ luck to ya!" (Hope ya win!)
66. French 'words'
67. Swill

Down
1. Free: 2 wds.
2. "It's _ __!" (Crook-to-crook warning)
3. Hagar the Horrible's dog
4. Weight unit in China
5. More level or fair
6. Four-wheeled carriage
7. Association, briefly
8. Da's Russian opposite
9. Christmas tune: "_ __, _ Come, Emmanuel"
10. Skiing surface sort: 2 wds.
11. Big brass?
12. Eve's beloved
13. Wine hues
18. Jazz improvisations
22. Liv Tyler's 'Lord of the Rings' movies part
25. Terrier type, commonly
27. Visitor in Clement Clarke Moore's famous Christmas poem: 2 wds.
28. Sheep sort
29. Hollywood icon James
30. Conserve
31. Christmas, e.g.
32. "Let me know __ __in your way."
33. Secular
36. Home base, shortly
38. Baby barn bird
39. Garlic: French
43. Actress Ms. Davis
45. Northern Lights = __ Borealis
46. Mountain's top
47. Some fabrics
50. Way to cook
51. Baccarat call
52. Little bird's sound
53. Churn
54. Lingering noise
55. Cooking fat
56. Pillow cover
58. Alberta town
61. Egg-related prefix

Friday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Friday's Sudoku

1	2	4	3	6	9	7	8	5
5	8	3	7	4	2	1	9	6
7	9	6	1	8	5	2	3	4
4	3	2	9	7	6	8	5	1
6	1	5	8	2	3	9	4	7
8	7	9	4	5	1	3	6	2
2	4	7	6	9	8	5	1	3
3	6	8	5	1	7	4	2	9
9	5	1	2	3	4	6	7	8

	7			5		1	9	
8	2					5		4
			6				2	3
		8		9	1			
7								5
			8	3		9		
3	8				5			
4		6					8	1
	9	7		2			5	

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